

Recipe: Ratatouille with cod



Provided by Jasmine Challis, Accredited Sports Dietician

This is a great dish for the end of summer/early autumn if you are watching your budget as the ingredients should be at their cheapest. It's also a great way to use up spare vegetables like peppers. To make sure it doesn't end up like soup don't chop the vegetables into very small pieces.

It takes a bit longer to cook and prepare than previous recipes, so it's good for an evening where you can be home at a reasonable time and get on with laundry or ironing or other tasks in between the different parts of the preparation and cooking.

Preparation time: around 15 minutes for the chopping but you need at least 30 minutes to 'dry out' the aubergine and courgettes. Cooking time: around 1 hour, it doesn't matter if you cook for a little longer.

Serves 2-3

Ingredients

- 1 large aubergine
- 1-2 medium courgettes
- 1 medium onion
- 1 pepper – use a mixture of orange/red/yellow/green if you have any available
- 2 large tomatoes, or 1 x 14 oz (400 g) tin Italian tomatoes, well drained
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 2 tablespoons oil (preferably olive oil)
- 1 level dessertspoon/2-4 leaves roughly torn fresh basil/oregano if available
- salt and freshly milled black pepper
- 1 individual portion cod – fresh or frozen (use frozen as it comes with instructions unless you are used to cooking fresh fish). Vegetarians could use tofu instead, meat eaters could serve with a chicken breast.

Method

1. Serve with some carbohydrate according to choice – a jacket potato is a good choice for Autumn though new potatoes would be great too. Decide whether you are having potatoes, and if so what sort. Jacket potatoes done in the oven need to be started before you start the ratatouille but if you cook them for 10 minutes in the microwave first (remember to prick the skins with a fork first) they will be fine with around 30 minutes in the oven.
2. Next wash/wipe the aubergines with a very clean damp cloth or a piece of just-wet kitchen roll and cutting them into 1 cm slices, then cut each slice in half; the courgettes should be wiped as well and cut into 2cm slices.
3. Now put the whole lot into a colander/onto a plate if you have no colander, sprinkle generously with salt, press them down with a suitably sized plate and put weights (or other heavy objects) on top of the plate.
4. Let them stand for at least 30 minutes and ideally about 1 hour – the salt will draw out any bitterness along with excess moisture. Rinse well to make sure you get rid of as much salt as possible and allow to drain.
5. Meanwhile chop up the onion roughly, deseed and core the pepper and chop up too. Skin the tomatoes (plunging them into boiling water for a couple of minutes is the best way to loosen the skins) or drain the tinned tomatoes, then quarter them, and roughly chop.
6. To cook the ratatouille, gently fry the onions and garlic in the oil in a large saucepan over a medium heat for 10-12 minutes, then add the red (or other coloured) chopped pepper.
7. Dry the pieces of courgette and aubergine in kitchen paper, then add them to the saucepan.
8. Next add the basil/oregano and a small pinch of salt if liked and pepper, stir once really well, then simmer very gently, covered, for 30 minutes.
9. After that time add the tomato, taste to check the seasoning and cook for a further 15 minutes. Remove the lid for the last 5 minutes or so.
10. Once you have added the tomato cook the cod following the instructions on the pack (if using frozen portion).
11. Serve and enjoy!